A History of Music on the Fort Wayne Campus

A Timeline of Developments

March 13, 2023

A history of music at the Fort Wayne Campus (ref. college catalogs, magazines, yearbooks, personal accounts)			
1904-06	Fort Wayne Bible Training School	Voice and piano taught (1930 yearbook)	Mrs. J. E. Ramseyer
1907-08		The aim of the music course is to enable the students to interpret the simple of musical page at sight with reasonable ability. The regular class work is chorus and part singing with use of syllables. Mrs. Ramseyer continued teaching piano; Prof. Germann, voice	Edwin J. Germann Mrs. J. E. Ramseyer
1908-09		Same with addition of private lessons by qualified instructor @ $.50 with additional small charge for practice use of piano	Mark Evans
1909-10		Notation, General Chorus, Conducting and Sight-reading added as subjects	
1910-11		Two years of studies which included conducting courses, chorus, private study and a rudiments of music course	None listed
1911-12		Same. C. A. Gerber taught the curriculum and voice; Prof. Halsworth taught piano	C. A. Gerber Prof. Halsworth
1912-13			C. A. Gerber
1913-14		First mention of a music department. Curriculum in Notation, Sight Reading, Conducting, General Chorus, Harmony, Technique. Private instruction was offered. An orchestra was also offered. Practical Christian Service first mentioned.	C. A. Gerber, Miss M. E. Orinciffe
1914-15		Same	Same
1915-16		Same	Same
1916-17		Same. Biblical-Music Course was started	C. A. Gerber Miss Stella Bixel
1917-18			C. A. Gerber
1918-19			C. A. Gerber,

			Miss Laura Amstutz
1919-20			C. A. Gerber, Miss Esther Pohlmann
1920-21			C. A. Gerber Miss Esther Pohlmann
1921-22			C. A. Gerber Miss Ester Pohlmann
1922-23			C. A. Gerber Miss Rosina Ramseyer
1923-24			C. A. Gerber Miss Rosina Ramseyer
1924-25		Gospel Teams added to Practical Christian Service.	C. A. Gerber Miss Rosina Ramseyer
1925-26		Course numbers were added.	C. A. Gerber Miss Rosina Ramseyer
1926-27		In this year gospel teams gave 210 services (out of Fort Wayne), over 700 songs sung and over 47,000 miles traveled.	C. A. Gerber Miss Rosina Ramseyer
1927-28			C. A. Gerber Miss Rosina Ramseyer
1928-29			C. A. Gerber Ray Weaver
1929-30		B.T.S. song in back of catalog	C. A. Gerber Ray Weaver
1930-31			C. A. Gerber Ray Weaver (on leave), Mrs. Rosina Ramseyer Parlee
1931-32			C. A. Gerber Ray Weaver (on leave)
1932-33	Fort Wayne Bible Institute	A course in normal training added-to help students teach music theory to others	C. A. Gerber Ray Weaver
1933-34			C. A. Gerber Howard M. Skinner
1934-35		Men's chorus and Women's chorus appear in the curriculum	C. A. Gerber Ray Weaver

1935-36			C. A. Gerber Ray Weaver
1936-37		Violin and Keyboard Harmony courses added	C. A. Gerber Ray Weaver Alfred Zahlout, vln
1937-38			C. A. Gerber Ray Weaver Alfred Zahlout, vln, Mrs. Harold Wiswell
1938-39			C. A. Gerber Ray Weaver Alfred Zahlout, vln, Ira Gerig
1939-40		Added a 3 year Standard Bible-Music course (in addition to the two year course). Organ and Hymnology courses added.	C. A. Gerber Ray Weaver Ira Gerig
1940-41		Plans for a new music building took shape	C. A. Gerber Ray Weaver (leave), Ira Gerig Ruth Bixel
1941-42		The building at the corner of W. Rudisill Blvd and Indiana Avenue began in late spring. Dedication of Founders Memorial Hall was in May 1942. Building featured over thirty practice rooms, four large teaching studios, a chapel/auditorium with accordion door open to a practice gym, a dining room, four classrooms and a lounge.	C. A. Gerber Ray Weaver (leave), Ira Gerig
1942-43		Courses in wind instruments and History of Christian music added.	C. A. Gerber Ray Weaver (leave), Ira Gerig John Will (inst.)
1943-44			C. A. Gerber Robert Pfundstein
1944-45			C. A. Gerber Robert Pfundstein Oliver Steiner and others

1945-46			Oliver E. Steiner C. A. Gerber Robert Pfundstein, Margurite Steiner
1946-47		Academic Bible-Music course (4 year degree) started. 3 year degree continued; 2 year degree in Bible-Music not present. S. A. Witmer appointed President	Oliver E. Steiner C. A. Gerber Robert Pfundstein, Margurite Steiner
1947-48		School of Music renamed the School of Sacred Music	Oliver E. Steiner, C. A. Gerber, Robert Pfundstein, Margurite Steiner, Francis Meredith Smith
1948-49			Oliver E. Steiner C. A. Gerber Ira Gerig Margurite Steiner, Dorothy Sollenberger
1949-50			Oliver E. Steiner C. A. Gerber Ira Gerig Margurite Steiner, Dorothy Sollenberger
1950-51		Bach. Of Sacred Music degree offered. Courses in Gospel Broadcasting offered. A Cappella Choir named.	Oliver E. Steiner C. A. Gerber Ira Gerig Dorothy Sollenberger, June Swaback Alton Cronk John Will
1951-52	Fort Wayne Bible College	Name change. Messiah chorus added to courses. Rene Frank joins music faculty	Oliver E. Steiner C. A. Gerber Richard Gerig Mabel Rose, June Swaback Rene Frank

1952-53			Oliver E. Steiner C. A. Gerber Richard Gerig Mabel Rose Rene Frank
1953-54			Oliver E. Steiner, Richard Gerig, Rene Frank, Ira Gerig
1954-55		Oliver Steiner becomes ill and passes away, March, 1955.	Oliver E. Steiner, Richard Gerig, Rene Frank, Ira Gerig
1955-56		Major Restructuring in departments and divisions. Education courses added. Music education courses also added.	Rene Frank Richard Gerig, Ira Gerig, Betty M. Stanley, Frederick Jackisch, Eloise Wood
1956-57		Music because the Division III-School of Music. The degrees Bachelor of Music Education, Bachelor of Science in Music added.	Rene Frank Ira Gerig Betty M. Stanley, Frederick Jackisch, Eloise Wood Lansing Bulgin
1957-58			Rene Frank Ira Gerig Betty M. Stanley, Frederick Jackisch, Eloise Wood Lansing Bulgin
1958-59		Jared Gerig becomes President	Rene Frank Ira Gerig, Betty M. Stanley, Eloise Wood Guy, Robert Myers

1959-60		Bible-Music degree dropped	Rene Frank, Ira Gerig, Betty M. Stanley, Eloise Wood Guy, Robert Myers
1960-61			Rene Frank, Ira Gerig, Betty M. Stanley, Eloise Wood Guy, Robert Myers
1961-62			Rene Frank, Ira Gerig, Ken Mays, Eloise Guy, Robert Myers
1962-63		Music Department becomes Department of Music and Fine Arts and a member of the Division of Arts and Sciences.	Rene Frank, Ira Gerig, Richard Elmer, Ken Mays, Eloise Guy, Robert Myers, Robert Shambaugh
1963-64			Rene Frank, Ira Gerig, Richard Elmer, Ken Mays, John Bechtelheimer
1964-65		Rene Frank passes away March, 1965.	Rene Frank, Ira Gerig, Marlene Langosch, Ken Mays, John Bechtelheimer, Robert Myers
1965-66			Ira Gerig, Marlene Langosch, Ken Mays,

			John Bechtelheimer, Robert Myers
1966-67			Ira Gerig, Marlene Langosch, Robert Myers, Marilyn Andersen, Margurite Steiner
1967-68		Degrees now Bachelor of Music and the Bachelor of Music Education	Ira Gerig, Marlene Langosch, Robert Myers, Marilyn Andersen, Margurite Steiner, James Clauser
1968-69		Bachelor of Music with concentrations	Ira Gerig, Marlene Langosch, Robert Myers, Marilyn Andersen, Margurite Steiner, Earl Cunningham, Jay Platte
1969-70			Ira Gerig, Marlene Langosch, Marilyn Andersen, Margurite Steiner, Jay Platte, Earl Cunningham
1970-71			Ira Gerig, Marlene Langosch, Marilyn Andersen, Margurite Steiner, Jay Platte,
1971-72			Ira Gerig, Marlene Langosch, Marilyn Andersen, Margurite Steiner, Jay Platte,

			Lowell Weitz
1972-73		First operetta, The Mikado, performed on campus	Ira Gerig, Marlene Langosch, Margurite Steiner, Jay Platte,
1973-74			Ira Gerig, Margurite Steiner, Jay Platte, Shirley Platte
1974-75		Return to Bach of Mu., Bach of MusEd., and Bach. Of Science	Ira Gerig, James Loomis, Jacquline Loomis, Margurite Steiner, Jay Platte, Shirley Platte
1975-76			Ira Gerig, James Loomis, Jacquilyn Loomis, Margurite Steiner, Jay Platte, Shirley Platte, Ellen Soden
1976-77		Operetta, HMS Pinafore, performed in spring	Ira Gerig, James Loomis, Jacquilyn Loomis, Margurite Steiner, Jay Platte, Shirley Platte
1977-78			Ira Gerig, James Loomis, Jacquilyn Loomis, Jay Platte, Shirley Platte
1978-79			Ira Gerig, James Loomis, Jacquilyn Loomis,

			Jay Platte, Shirley Platte
1979-80			Ira Gerig, James Loomis, Jacquilyn Loomis, Jay Platte, Shirley Platte
1980-81			Ira Gerig, James Loomis, Jacquilyn Loomis, Jay Platte, Shirley Platte
1981-82			Ira Gerig, James Loomis, Jacquilyn Loomis, Jay Platte, Shirley Platte
1982-83			Ira Gerig, Marlene Everson, Jay Platte
1983-84			Ira Gerig, Marlene Everson, Jay Platte
1984-85			Ira Gerig, Marlene Everson, Jay Platte
1985-86			Dana Collins, Marlene Everson, Jay Platte
1986-87			Dana Collins, Marlene Everson, Jay Platte
1987-88			Dana Collins, Marlene Everson, Jay Platte
1988-89			Dana Collins, Marlene

			Everson, Jay Platte
1989-90	Summit Christian College		Dana Collins, Marlene Everson, Jay Platte
1990-91			Dana Collins, Marlene Everson, Jay Platte
1992-93	Taylor University Fort Wayne	Program discontinued	
1993-94			
1994-95			
1995-96			
1996-97		Christian Ministries/Music Ministries	Jay Platte
1997-98			
1998-99			
1999-2000			
2000-01		Associate of Arts in Music	Jay Platte, Ken Johnson
2001-02			
2002-03			
2003-04		Music Major with Concentrations	
2004-05			
2005-06			
2006-07		Music Program discontinued	Ken Johnson
2007-08			Ken Johnson
2008-09		Campus closes	Ken Johnson
May 31, 2009 Fort Wayne campus ceases to exist			

A History of Music on Fort Wayne Campus

A Narrative

The first music instruction, according to the Fort Wayne Bible Training School 1930 yearbook, was by Mrs. J. E. Ramseyer, 1904-06, who taught voice and piano. The preface to the course listing is, " The aim of the music course is to enable the students to interpret the simple of musical page at sight with reasonable ability. The regular class work is chorus and part singing with use of syllables." (1907 catalog)

By 1911, C. A. Gerber joined the young school's faculty. By1913. The curriculum included Notation, Sight Reading, Conducting, General Chorus, Harmony, Technique. Private instruction was offered, as well as an orchestra. This was also the year Practical Work (Christian Service) first mentioned. In 1916 the first 2-year program (they called it a course) in Bible-Music was offered. For the next several years Mr. Gerber lead the program with the assistance of various private instructors. During these early years "the entire student body was required to spend one hour a week in a special hymn singing class." While not mentioned, it is assumed that the chapel in the Administration Building (Schultz Hall) and perhaps another room was where music instruction took place. Gospel teams were mentioned first in 1924. The relationship between gospel teams and the music faculty was interactive and supportive.

Over the next decade, enrollment at FWBTS grew, as did the music program, but curriculum remained about the same. In 1928, Raymond Weaver joined the music faculty to give instruction in piano and other areas. Mr. Weaver taught here (with some leaves to further his education) until the mid 1940s where he left to teach at the newly-formed Bethel College (Mishawaka).

It was also during this period of time general chorus began to perform, especially at the end of the school year. In the 1935 yearbook a section on chorus groups gives insight of organized curricular choral groups: Special Chorus-a group of about sixty singers meeting on Tuesday afternoons, and the Men's Chorus who actually traveled some during the year. By the next year, a Woman's Chorus is also active. On December 17, 1944 the Special Chorus, under the Direction of Oliver Steiner, performed the first complete *Messiah*, a tradition which continued for the next 35 years. An orchestra was again started that year. In 1947, the men's and women's choruses were renamed Men's Glee Club and Women's Glee Club. In 1947-48 the Special Chorus became the Concert Chorus and the Messiah Chorus became a separate group. Sunrise Chapel chorus was first mentioned in 1949. In 1950-51, the Concert Chorus was renamed the *A Cappella Choir*.

In 1932 the name of the institution was changed to Fort Wayne Bible Institute with A course in normal training added-to help students teach music theory to others. Faculty who taught during this era included Howard Skinner and Alfred Zahlout. In 1938, Ira Gerig became a faculty member. He would leave to serve in the military as well as church ministry, return and then leave briefly again to teach at Asuza-Pacific College before returning to the college.

Plans for a new music building began to seriously form in the late 1930s. Ground breaking for the building 162' long x 95' wide at the corner of Indiana Avenue and West Rudisill Boulevard began the summer of 1941 with the completion and dedication by May, 1942. The building was named Founders Memorial Hall in honor of the six founders. It contained over 30 practice rooms, 4 large teaching studios, 3 large classrooms, a chapel/auditorium (with massive folding doors that opened to a practice gym which could double as an overflow), and a full sized dining room, lounge and apartment and featured an intercom system to every room. It was a major boost for the Music Department.

In 1944, Oliver Steiner, who graduated from FWBTS (Bluffton College, Ohio State University, Northwestern University) and went on to teach at Bob Jones University, returned as head of the Music Department. [more needed…under Professor Steiner, FWBI & FWBC initiated or developed …..] C. A. Gerber who had been a faithful faculty member through three decades continued teaching until he retired in 1953, having served 42 years. A three-year program was also instituted during this period.

On July 1, 1950, Fort Wayne Bible Institute became Fort Wayne Bible College. Soon after a new Alma Mater was authored by S. A. Witmer and composed by Richard Gerig.

In 1951, Rene Frank joined the music faculty. His works and biography now reside in the Allen County Library main brance.

It was in 1955-Oliver Steiner, director of the School of Music, was director of the A Cappella Choir, and traveled widely on annual concert tours with the group. He was an instructor in voice, music theory, and instruments. He was well known in the Fort Wayne area for his outstanding work as conductor of the Messiah' performances at the college during the Christmas season each year. His last appearance in this capacity was on December 13, 1953, and it was the eighteenth time he conducted the oratorio. "…passed away about 7:00 a.m. on March 8, 1955, at his home in Fort Wayne. He had been convalescing since August of last year when he suffered a heart attack while spending the summer in Flint, Michigan." (Vision, v3n5 March, 1955)

Professor Frank became head of the Music Department in 1957. At this same time major restructuring in departments and divisions took place. Education courses added to the curriculum as well as music education courses also added. A year later, music

became the Division III School of Music with degrees Bachelor of Music Education, Bachelor of Science in Music were added. Betty Stanley, Richard Gerig, John F. Wilson, June Swaback, Margurite Steiner, Richard Elmer and John Bechtelheimer among others joined the music faculty. Under Mr. Bechtelheimer's tenure the *a Cappella Choir* became the *Chorale.* Two recordings of the group were made during these years, the second of which was recorded in March, 1965 in the RCA Studios, New York and featured Dr. Frank's cantata, *O Give Thanks.*

Christian Service gospel teams continued to develop. They were schedule through the Christian Service office, and there was a continuing liaison between the groups and the music faculty, although some groups developed on their own. Another impact on the department and the college was the continued growth of broadcasting from the campus.

After the death of Dr. Frank in March,1965, Ira Gerig assumed the department chair. Marlene Langosch and Marilyn Andersen joined the music faculty. It was a time of enrollment expansion both for the college and the department. Under Miss Langosch's initiative instrumental music developed into a touring Concert Band and Brass Ensemble.

Singing Collegians came on the scene in fall of 1965 as a concept of Paul Robbins and Joy Gerig, with the goal of getting the name of FWBC out to a larger community in the Fort Wayne area. This was a Christian Service group, but had a continuing impact on the Music Department in that many students wanted to be in both departmental and Christian Service groups. This presented somewhat of a dilemma. Jay Platte directed the group after Paul Robbins left later that year. He also coached other Christian Service music groups.

Still a student at the time, Mr. Platte was asked to lead the *Chorale* and also the December, 1967, *Messiah*. He toured throughout the year with *Singing Collegians and* with the *Chorale* in their spring, 1968 tour. In fall, 1968, he became an Instructor and juggled the completion of his student teaching along with a teaching load. He continued to teach, conduct, administer and integrate coursework and activities with other areas until he took retirement, spring, 2006.

Continued development of the instrumental program took place with Dr. James Loomis joining the faculty. Miss Marlene Everson joined as voice instructor later on. Also in the 1970s performances of staged musicals beginning with *The Mikado* (1973) and followed by *The Martyr's Mirrior, H.M.S. Pinafore, Amahl and the Night Visitors* were staged. Christian musical works such as *Apostle, Go Tell Your World, The Witness, The*

Dreamer, God Has Always Had a People began to expand the department's staged performing schedule. With the addition of Witmer Hall, a recording studio was used for recording groups, rehearsals, instrumental backups, composition and special projects.

In the early 1970s in response to increasing demand for music instruction from the surrounding community, Class Piano for Children was founded with Jacqueline Loomis as the first class piano instructor. A 12 piano Wurlitzer piano lab was purchased for this purpose. [CSA paid for the entire lease even from the first year.] Growing and diversifying, it was renamed The Community School of Arts. Summer arts camps, Performing Arts Contest, applied instruction in several instruments and even the Community Brass Ensemble were outgrowths of this endeavor. In its most successful days, the contest hosted almost 500 students, each of who were adjudicated on their performance.

Also around the turn of the decade, computers were introduced into the music curriculum. In fact, it is believed that the first computer in regular use on campus was an Apple IIe used for music instruction and drill programs.

In 1981, Mr. Dana Collins joined the music faculty to teach instrumental music, theory and composition. The instrumental program continued to develop, continuing the Concert Band tradition that Dr. Loomis started of *Pops 'n Pizza* which enjoyed great success over a number of years.

On July 1, 1989, Fort Wayne Bible College became Summit Christian College, and on July 1, 1992, through merger/acquisition, Summit Christian College became Taylor University Fort Wayne.

With the merger/acquisition of Taylor University, the Music Department was disbanded and faculty except for Dr. Platte was released. There were brief attempts to restore the program which met with limited success and little strategic support. Any vestige of a music degree program was discontinued in the spring of 2006. The campus closed its doors, spring, 2009.

[*The primary source for this information was the college catalogs and other publications. Other information supplied by Dr. Jay Platte*]